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STAT

GOP WILL 'LET GEORGE DO IT'

Bush Recall to Head CIA Points Up 'Rescue' Role

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WASHINGTON—"Let George do it" has become an increasingly popular solution to Republican Party problems and the call once again has gone out to George Bush.

This time, the 51-year-old Bush is being returned from his post as U.S. envoy to Peking to take over the Central Intelligence Agency, battered and demoralized by three years of post-Watergate public and congressional criticism.

The last time Bush was summoned to rescue an ailing organization was in early 1973, when President Richard M. Nixon named him to the chairmanship of the Republican National Committee.

A onetime Texas congressman who was twice defeated for a U.S. Senate seat, Bush took over the committee just as the GOP had sunk to its lowest ebb since the heyday of the Democratic New Deal.

With the Nixon administration under mounting attack, the new chairman was faced with the task of raising funds and trying to bolster Republican congressional candidates for the 1974 elections.

Despite the deepening gloom, Bush never let down his characteristic optimism and established a sufficiently popular image to win prominent mention as a candidate for Vice President after Spiro T. Agnew's resignation and again after Gerald R. Ford inherited the Presidency.

The 1974 election proved to be the disaster for the GOP that it was expected to be, but the chairman won credit for keeping the committee solvent and as free as possible from Watergate contamination.

Bush first demonstrated his ability to overcome the odds when he was

named U.S. ambassador to the United Nations in 1971. Despite his lack of diplomatic experience, he and his energetic wife Barbara quickly won friends among skeptical diplomats. The new ambassador won widespread sympathy for staging a Custer-like battle to keep Nationalist China in the world organization. President Nixon and Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger pulled the rug from under him by announcing their visit to Peking before the vote in the General Assembly's foredooming the effort.

Again, Bush showed no bitterness and, to the surprise of many, the Chinese Communists made no objection when he was nominated Sept. 4, 1974, to replace David K. E. Bruce as chief of the liaison office in Peking. Bush tackled his new assignment with his usual eagerness.

"This job is exactly what I want to do," he declared.

He and his wife became a familiar sight as they bicycled around the old city. Bush took Chinese lessons and became an accomplished guide for the torrent of congressional visitors who have come to regard a visit to the Chinese capital as a must.

Even with access to Chinese leaders limited by the unofficial status of the U.S. mission—Bush had hoped that the mission would be raised to an embassy before he departed—Bush made wide contacts. He wrote to a friend recently that he was surprised at the consideration given him despite reported coolness toward the United States in recent months.

Tall and handsome, with long brown hair, Bush was born to a family prominent in New York financial circles and in public service. His father,

Prescott Bush, was a Republican senator from Connecticut in the 1950s and a member of a prestigious Wall Street investment firm. His mother, Dorothy Walker, was a member of the family which gave its name to the Anglo-American professional golf championship, the Walker Cup.

After graduation from Yale and service in the Navy as a pilot during World War II, Bush founded an oil-drilling equipment firm in Texas which made him a millionaire. He sold his interest in the Zapata Off-Shore Co. when he entered politics as a congressman in 1966.

Friends saw the latest change in a fast-moving career as an indication that Bush may once again be under consideration by Mr. Ford for the Vice Presidency, that he is being returned to a Washington agency from which he could reenter politics more logically than from Peking. They also believe that he is one of the few top-ranking Republicans who could begin to restore the CIA's credibility with the public.